

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants respectfully request acknowledgement of receipt of all of the required certified copies of the priority documents. In paragraph 12 of the Office Action Summary Page of the June 28, 2005 Office Action, the Examiner checked a box indicating that only some of the certified copies of the §119 priority documents have been received. However, Applicants are only claiming §119 priority to a single document (Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-183886), the certified copy of which was filed on July 9, 2004. Although Applicants are claiming §120 priority (not §119 priority) to PCT/JP02/00718, there is no requirement for a certified copy of the PCT document (unless specifically needed in cases where there is a prior art reference with a relevant date between the PCT filing date and the actual U.S. filing date). *See e.g.*, MPEP §1895.01(II). Accordingly, since the certified copy of the single §119 priority reference has been filed, Applicants respectfully request an indication that all of the required certified copies have been received.

As an additional preliminary matter, Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of the allowance of Claims 7-9 and 13-15.

Claim 12 stands objected to for reciting a second phase modulation element, while no first phase modulation element has been recited. In response, Applicants have added a first phase modulation element to independent Claim 10, which is the base claim for dependent Claim 12. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,086,212 to Onishi et al in view of United States Patent No. 6,636,283 to Sasagawa et al. Applicants have cancelled Claims 2 and 11, without prejudice, and have incorporated the subject matter of Claim 2 into Claim 1 and the subject matter of Claim 11 into Claim 10. Accordingly, this rejection of Claims 2 and 11 has been rendered moot. However, with respect to amended Claims 1, 10 and 12, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of the claimed invention. More specifically, neither Onishi et al. nor Sasagawa et al., alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a lighting device that includes, *inter alia*, “a [first] phase modulation element disposed between the light source unit and the polarization separation element,” as now defined in amended Claims 1 and 10.

With regard to now-cancelled Claims 2 and 11, the Examiner correctly acknowledged that neither Onishi et al. nor Sasagawa et al. specifically teach a phase modulation element disposed between the light source and the polarization separation element, and that Onishi et al. only teach a quarter waver plate being disposed adjacent to the polarizing means. To remedy this deficiency, the Examiner stated that an arrangement of the phase modulation element between the light source unit and the polarization separation element is an obvious arrangement to one having ordinary skill in the art.

However, the arrangement of the phase modulation element between the light source and the polarization element produces a specific technical effect as described below, not simply realizing the alteration of the illumination or providing a desired optical effect.

As described in the fifth and sixth embodiments of the present application, when the phase modulation element is disposed between the light source unit and the polarization separation element, that of the linearly polarized light which has been reflected on the polarization separation element and returned, which is transformed into circularly polarized light by the phase modulation element, reflected on the reflector of the light source unit and is incident again on the phase modulation element is transformed into linearly polarized light which is transmitted by the polarization separation element. Thus, the linearly polarized light which has been reflected on the polarization separation element and returned can propagate to the light guide plate by returning only once to the light source. The linearly polarized light which has been reflected on the polarization separation element and returned does not have to repeat several times the reflection on the transmission of the respective elements, and the secondary emission, which lessens losses due to the reflection on and the transmission of the respective elements, and the secondary emission, which leads to higher efficiency of utilizing light. Accordingly, by arranging the phase modulation element between the light source unit and the polarization separation element, higher light utilization efficiency can be obtained. In combination with liquid crystal panels, brighter liquid crystal panels can be realized.

The technical effect of higher light utilization efficiency as described above can be obtained only by arranging the phase modulation element between the light source unit and the polarization separation element. Namely, if the phase modulation element were disposed between the polarization separation element and the light guide plate, the phase modulation element would only play a role of altering the illumination or providing a simple optical effect and would not realize higher light utilization efficiency of the lighting device. The phase modulation element arranged on the side of the light source unit produces the technical effect which is completely different from that produced by the phase modulation element arranged on the side of the light guide plate.

As discussed above, the phase modulation element of the present invention disposed between the light source unit and the polarization separation element offers the specific technical effect which cannot be obtained if the phase modulation element is disposed between the polarization separation element and the light guide plate. Such arrangement of the phase modulation element cannot be regarded as an obvious matter to one of ordinary skill in the art. Whether the phase modulation element is disposed between the light source unit and the phase separation element, or between the phase separation element and light guide plate, does not correspond to a simple rearrangement of parts of an invention.

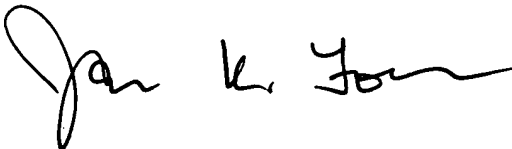
Therefore, even if the teachings of Onishi et al. and Sasagawa et al. were combined with each other, it is clear that the present invention according to independent Claims 1 and 10 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made.

Accordingly, for at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claims 1 and 10 and associated dependent claim 12.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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